

WAIHAHA ECHO ROCK

260 Series Map: Kuratau, T18

Topo50 Map: BG34 Piropiro & BG35 Tihoi

How to get to START - Exit Taupo on **SH1** North.

- Near the top of the hill go left to **Poihipi Road**
- Follow the road then left to **Whangamata Road** following the signs for Kinloch
- Do **NOT** turn left for Kinloch but go straight ahead till you reach a T-junction
- At the T-junction to **SH32** turn left
- Turn left to Waihaha Road which soon becomes gravel and proceed to the end

Rough description: A fairly strenuous, longish (16km) 5–6 hour out and back trip from off SH32 down towards and parallel to Lake Taupo on relatively new MTB track which is part of the Great Lake Trail. There is a fair bit of climbing involved – some 500 metres (GPS) gain / loss – but there is nothing steep or tricky.

Detail: The first part of Waihaha Road is sealed but the surface soon becomes gravel and in wet weather there can be large puddles plus a few potholes. Near the end it does get a bit tricky as it deteriorates into a dirt farm track with serious wet traps if raining – however the last few hundred metres can be walked in minutes leaving the transport in a safer drier spot before the paddock

In the paddock car park (**WP01**^{490masl}) there are two huge informative notices to read before heading through the gate and slightly downhill to the SE for 100 metres to another notice on the (**WP02**^{488masl}) crossing track – head left to arrive at a locked gate (barrier) and a “bike” gate. There is a clear bend in the track (**WP03**^{482masl}) turning to the NNE. For the next hour it is all gently downhill whilst the track wiggles about through not very inspiring regrowth when the sun is not shining – the appearance changes dramatically when the sun does shine giving a dappled appearance. There are few features to note here apart from two huge ferns (**WP04**^{458masl}) and a good view of the lake (**WP05**^{436masl}).

Views improve dramatically on reaching the bluffs above the lake edge (**WP06**^{391masl}) and (**WP07**^{374masl}) where there is a huge seat with the track builders’ names engraved plus views of the mountain and Kaimanawa Ranges.



From Darwin’s Corner there is a condensed series of zigzags downwards then a more gentle descent to reach a large, upstanding curved rocky face – this is Echo Rock (**WP12**^{395masl}). By standing 1.5 – 2 metres out from the middle of the rocky face the sound of the local stream changes from a low gurgle to a loud rush of water.

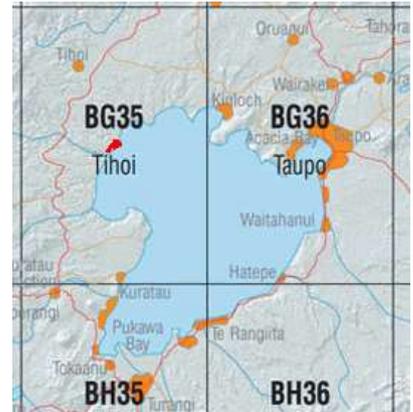


From here it is over the bridge on the Otupoto Stream (**WP13**^{396masl}) then 15min upslope to pass through Ambush Alley (**WP14**^{449masl}) hoping that the Lone Ranger is around to prevent an ambush by the black-hand gang. It is then only a few minutes to yet another seat with views for lunch. When to turn is your decision but remember the last part of the return is a long uphill.



NZ Grid **GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM **GPS:** NZTM on WGS84



- *Tramp is the RED line*

Huge Trail Notice



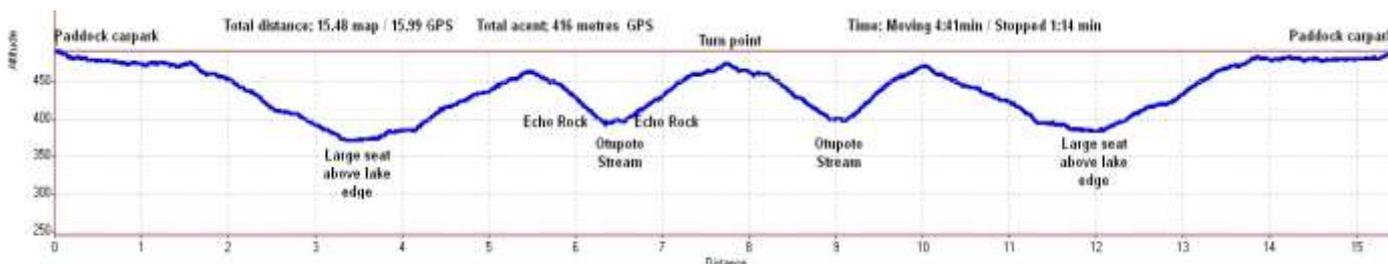
From the seat the trail heads NE on top of the bluffs before turning left upslope to cross two bridges (**WP08**^{390masl}) then heads uphill on zigzags with a seat offering views partway up (**WP09**^{407masl}). Uphill progress continues as the track wanders about slowly heading NW then N to again arrive on top of the bluffs overlooking the lake offering more massive views (**WP10**^{454masl}).

From here there is almost level bluff-top progress to the west to soon arrive at Darwin’s Corner (**WO11**^{448masl}). From this viewpoint walkers or bikers can be seen, if you are lucky, on the track on the other side of the Otupoto Valley.

Map and Google Image with GPS data



N	Easting	Northing	Alt	Description
01	1839064	5711378	490	Park in paddock at very end of Waihaha Road near track signs
02	1839120	5711350	488	0.1km (5min); Left at junction to meet barrier and bike gate on wide track
03	1839123	5711410	482	0.2km (7min); Sharp bend in track to head NNE
04	1839660	5712202	458	1.9km (36min); Two large ferns on RHS on long, steady descent in less than inspiring regrowth forest
05	1839764	5712158	436	2.26km (43min); Good view of Lake Taupo
06	1840074	5711846	391	3.06km (58min); View of bluffs to the right, still steady descent which soon becomes almost level
07	1840564	5711957	374	3.67km (1:07min); Large seat on bluff above lake edge with great views to S and E
08	1840776	5712159	390	4.19km (1:33min); Double bridges on relatively easy ascent
09	1840837	5712194	407	4.35km (1:38min); Seat on zigzagging ascent
10	1840732	5712500	454	5.21km (1:55min); Seat with great lake views
11	1840389	5712484	448	5.78km (2:09min); Darwin's Corner viewpoint with possible sightings on track due N over valley
12	1840231	5712619	395	6.38km (2:22min); Echo Rock after long endless zigzag descent
13	1840124	5712701	396	6.58km (2:27min); Bridge over fast flowing Otupoto Stream
14	1840303	5712699	449	7.21km (2:41min); Ambush Alley - narrow defile after fair ascent
15	1840524	5712819	474	7.74km (2:56min); Enough for the day 5min beyond a seat with a view for lunch



Notes:

- GPS GPSmap 62sc
- WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- masl = metres above sea level

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